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SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN ENVIRONMENT, SCIENCE, AND TECHNOLOGY MONTHLY BRIEFINGS, JUNE 2007

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11. (U) Summary: This is the South African Environment, Science and Technology Monthly Briefings newsletter, June 2007, Volume 2, Number 3, prepared by the U.S. Embassy Pretoria, South Africa.

Topics of the newsletter:

- USTDA AND RAND WATER SYSTEMS FORM CAPACITY-BUILDING PARTNERSHIP
- GREEN SCORPIONS CLOSE DOWN MEDICAL WASTE PLANT
- PLANS TO PHASE OUT INCANDESCENT BULBS UNDERWAY IN SA

- GOVERNMENT DELAYS ISSUING A BIO-FUELS POLICY

- DME Proposes Green Tax on Heavy Polluting Sports Vehicles

- FOREIGN VISITORS MAY HAVE TO REGISTER TO "ROAM" ON MOBILE PHONE

- SADC COUNTRIES GRANTED PERMISSION TO SELL OFF IVORY STOCKPILES

- TUTU SAYS HUMAN-INDUCED CLIMATE CHANGE IS A SIN

End Summary.

USTDA AND RAND WATER SYSTEMS FORM CAPACITY-BUILDING PARTNERSHIP

12. (U) The United States Trade and Development Agency (USTDA) established a partnership with the Rand Water Systems (RWS) to help South Africa meet infrastructural and basic water services needs. USTDA will assist RWS in identifying relevant technologies and will sponsor RWS trips to the US linking RWS with US-based technology providers to bring this state-of-the art technology to the South African water market. RWS Director Makie Mandela noted that as a water-stressed country, South Africa cannot provide the constitutionally-required 1,700 cubic meters of water per person per year. She hoped that this partnership would provide the critical technical assistance that South Africa needs to develop an efficient water services infrastructure. Ambassador to South Africa Eric Bost said that "USTDA's strategic use of foreign assistance funds to support investment policy and decision-making in host countries creates an enabling environment for trade, investment and sustainable economic development, with emphasis on sectors which may benefit from exports of goods and services." RWS is a subsidiary of the Rand Water Board, established to provide business and technical support, advisory and capacity building services for water-related infrastructure projects in South Africa and Africa.

GREEN SCORPIONS CLOSE DOWN MEDICAL WASTE PLANT

13. (U) The Environmental Management Inspectors (EMI) Unit of the Department of Environmental and Tourism Affairs (better known as the "Green Scorpions") shut down a medical waste plant after months of negotiations with the owner proved fruitless. The site was littered

with expired medicine, needles, blood, amputated limbs, bandages, human remains and other medical equipment. The facility incinerates medical waste from Gauteng, Limpopo, the Free State and KwaZulu-Natal. Green Scorpions Director for Compliance Livhuwani Siphuma said the inspection revealed an "unacceptable disregard for the facility's permit conditions." He noted that poor storage and improper storm-water management resulted in blood-contaminated water leaking into the soil and possibly contaminating the groundwater. The incinerator, which was operated 24 hours a day, was overloaded, resulting in emissions of thick black smoke. Children from nearby townships had played on the dump and women passed it regularly on their way to collect water. After conducting the onsite compliance inspection, the Green Scorpions issued an official notice to close the facility. Siphuma advised that the facility would remain closed until all health requirements were complied with. Last month the facility was shut down, but allowed to open again when it challenged the suspension.

PLANS TO PHASE OUT INCANDESCENT BULBS UNDERWAY IN SA

14. (U) National Energy Efficiency Agency (NEEA) Operations Manager Barry Bredenkamp said that the South African government will phase out incandescent bulbs and replace them with the energy-saving compact fluorescent lamp (CFL) or "long-life" bulbs over the next three years. Central Energy Fund (CEF) and the UK-based Phillips Corporation are discussing developing a facility to manufacture CFL bulbs in Southern Africa (possibly Lesotho) later this year. CFL bulbs consume only 20 percent of the electricity that conventional bulbs consume. South Africa currently imports CFL bulbs from China and Indonesia. ESKOM General Manager of Investment Strategy Andrew Etzinger commented that if every South Africa household used CFL bulbs, the electricity demand could be reduced by up to 1,000 megawatts (MW). ESKOM distributed over 8 million CFL bulbs in 2005 and 2006. Five million bulbs were distributed in the Western Cape province, and over three million bulbs more are to be distributed in the Gauteng and Kwa-Zulu Natal provinces. In 2006, ESKOM conducted a door-to-door energy efficiency awareness campaign which it claims

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yielded a 229 MW electricity savings. Etzinger commented that before imposing a total ban on the incandescent bulb, the government and ESKOM must lower the price of CFL bulbs. The current cost is too prohibitive for low-income households. CFL bulbs retail for approximately \$3 while the conventional bulbs cost only \$0.57. Etzinger stated that ESKOM is aware that CFL bulbs have high mercury content, and that it would establish disposal sites so that the bulbs would not be dumped in landfills.

GOVERNMENT DELAYS ISSUING A BIO-FUELS POLICY

15. (U) South Africa's delay in promulgating bio-fuel marketing and production regulations has caused investors to withhold financing for Ethanol Africa, a maize-to-ethanol plant to be located in Bothaville, in the Free State province. Ethanol Africa CEO Johan Hoffman said that potential investors were already directing their funds to other countries because the government could not make a decision on the legislation. He commented that South Africa could be losing a place in the bio-fuel industry if the delay continues. Earlier this year, the press reported that construction had stopped at the Bothaville plant due to lack of financing. At that time, the company denied problems and said the halt was due to construction issues. Ethanol Africa, established in 2005, planned to build eight bio-fuel plants in South Africa's maize belt region.

16. (U) Department of Minerals and Energy (DME) Chief Director for Clean Energy Sandile Tyatya said that a bio-fuel policy could not be released due to a delay in briefing an inter-departmental committee on the outcome of consultations on the draft strategy. He also said that there were challenges which still needed to be addressed, including incentives for the industry and concerns about who would carry the price tag for the mandatory blending of the bio-ethanol into petrol. Tyatya said that the document would be presented to the cabinet sometime in June. According to the DME, it would then start reviewing the licensing of bio-fuel producers by September and hoped to finalize the policy by the end of the year. Tyatya emphasized that the government remains committed to bio-fuels as a

priority sector aligned to the Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa (ASGISA) because of its potential to create jobs in the agricultural sector. Industrial Development Corporation (IDC) official Rian Coetzee said they were supportive of the DME's cautious approach to the policy. IDC conducts feasibility studies into South Africa bio-fuel projects. Coetzee said DME's cautious approach would avoid hasty decisions and problems that should have been foreseen. The South African Petroleum Industry Association (SAPIA) remains concerned that the seven major fuel producers would suffer an "economic penalty" resulting from substituting portions of petrol and diesel with bio-fuels. SAPIA notes that it will cost "billions of rand" to adjust the refinery process for blending.

FOREIGN VISITORS MAY HAVE TO REGISTER TO "ROAM" ON MOBILE PHONES

17. (U) The South African parliamentary justice committee is discussing a bill which will make it mandatory for foreign visitors to register with a local service provider before they have international roaming on their telephones. If successful, the clause would become a part of the Regulation of the Interception of Communication Amendment Bill, whose purpose is fight organized crime conducted using mobile phones. The amended regulation will require visitors to provide details such as names, addresses, and passport numbers to service providers before acquiring access to roam on their phones. Cell phone companies have expressed concern about this proposal, arguing that visitors and tourists may be subjected to long registration lines at airports, which could pose serious logistical problems, especially during the 2010 Soccer World Cup. Department of Minerals and Energy

SADC COUNTRIES GRANTED PERMISSION TO SELL OFF IVORY STOCKPILES

18. (U) Countries attending the meeting of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild and Fauna and Flora (CITE) at the Hague in mid-June partially lifted the ban on the export of elephant ivory from Botswana (20 tons), Namibia (10 tons) and South Africa (30 tons). South African National Parks (SANP) CEO David Mabunda said South Africa would sell over 30 tons of the ivory currently stockpiled at the Kruger National Park to Japan. Mabunda said the sale would be a once-off and controlled sale, which means that CITES officials would regulate the sale process from the source to the market, to ensure that no illegal ivory enters the transaction. The SANP official said the proceeds from the ivory sale could reach between \$4.2 and \$5.7 million, most of which would be directed to conservation and management of the national parks. Animal rights activists have expressed anger over the CITES partial lift of the ban, arguing that the decision is "swayed by commercial interests that gave no consideration to the

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rights and welfare of the elephants." Animal Rights Africa Spokesman Steve Smit claimed that even though South Africa has previously been given CITES permission to sell ivory on condition that proceeds are channeled to conservation, those proceeds have not been disbursed as promised.

TUTU SAYS HUMAN-INDUCED CLIMATE CHANGE IS A SIN

19. (U) South African Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu told congregants at the Arctic Cathedral in Norway that world leaders who continue to ignore the reality of human-induced climate change are committing a sin against the children of world. The archbishop made the statement while delivering a special sermon on the eve of world environmental day. Tutu said that the poor and other vulnerable people would be most severely affected by droughts, flooding, and severe weather caused by climate change. He added that governments must set firm dates and targets for reducing their carbon emissions, according to the Kyoto treaty terms.

BOST